

MINUTES
BELLE ISLE PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 17, 2015

Location: Belle Isle Casino

***** Since there was not a quorum, this meeting served as a discussion based off the agenda *****

Roll Call and Excused Absences

PRESENT FOR THE BIPAC

Michele Hodges
Bryan Barnhill
Michael Curis

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Ron Olson
Scott Pratt
Rev. Lonnie Peek
Sommer Woods
Alicia Bradford
Bud Denker

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A quorum was not present, approval of previous meeting minutes will be postponed until the next scheduled meeting. Minutes for final approval include: July 16, 2015.

POINT OF ACTION

Hodges provided a correction of the Agenda. Michelle also introduced everyone to the new National Park Fellow, David Goldstein.

Hodges provided a welcome and gave a brief history of the Belle Isle Casino.

PUBLIC UPDATE SURVEY:

Hodges provided an overview of the public survey indicating that 375 phone interviews were conducted with participants from Detroit and 75 from each of the counties. The survey is near completion with an expected completion date of September 17, 2015. Michelle also gave examples of some of the questions asked of the participants. There were questions asked regarding access issues, law enforcement, island issues, friendliness, preferred usage and overall satisfaction.

Barnhill questioned how this data would be used and its relevance from a historical perspective. Ron Olson can provide additional details as stated by Hodges. From a management, engagement standpoint, please include a PR component and what we do after we compile the data.

Curis commented that the public feedback appears to suggest that everyone is happy, satisfied with the improvements and overall a rush in making additional improvements. He further commented that the survey will bring to the island exactly what the public desires. Public perception is what counts. Curis also referenced Detroit City Council President, George Cushingberry's video of Belle Isle and thanked him personally for his invitation to the Belle Isle Conservancy staff to visit the Detroit City Council. The Committee agreed that Cushingberry assisted in addressing the community perception of Belle Isle.

Hodges noted that this public survey will serve as quantifiable data to support future decisions. For example, how do individuals prefer to be communicated with, community engagement, and priority of projects.

IRON BELLE TRAIL UPDATE

State Trail Coordinator, Paul Yauk, gave an update on the Iron Belle Trail. Paul outlined his previous experience, which included Chene Park, in which he provided an historic overview. The Iron Belle Trail program was birthed based on the sitting Governor wanting to create a 1k mile trail from MI to Wisconsin. Michigan is number one in the nation. The vision for the Iron Belle Trail is to promote communities, and health and wellness of Michigan natural resources. There are two routes for this great trail; we have a walking route and a bicycle route which includes 12,500 miles of trail. Partners for this project include Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), National Park, Pure Michigan, and the Michigan Fitness Foundation to name a few. The Michigan Fitness Foundation is the fiduciary and just recently secured 25 thousand for this project. The program wants to focus on fundraising; and has raised 31.5 million for trails since 1970. MDOT has funded 67.5 million since 1992 and MDOT currently has provided 8.5 million on significant bridge projects. There are also Trust fund grants allocated for Belle Isle. The project team will be working hard to obtain private investors; beginning with a meeting next week that includes Governor Snyder. At this time total funding opportunities are 271 million.

Goal: Is to create 3 regions for the hiking gaps: UP 123 m, region 1 89.9 miles and region 3 has 163.3 miles, totaling 91M, noting Biking gaps in region 1 43.3 miles, Region 2 226 miles and region 3 is 645.6miles totaling 334+ miles totaling 180M and the Statewide impact of biking is 668M.

NATIONAL FELLOW UPDATE

David Goldstein, from the US Virgin Islands, is a part of the national parks team and was selected as a fellow. He works primarily in markets that do not have national parks within their confines. David provided an overview as it pertains to the overall mission of Belle Isle. Barnhill asked about the impact that the data might have pertaining to the project.

LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Many of the complaints received have been medical assists for heart attacks, there have been a few incidents of vandalism. Tickets and arrests are well below last year. The State reiterated to troopers to please make contact with the constituent for education and safety, rather than to write tickets. Public

relations activities are key. Barnhill commented that the engagement he has experienced is key. As it pertains to issues, how have the police been engaged?

STAFFING UPDATE

For staffing, Karis Floyd noted that a new event ranger has been hired and one general office assistant. Michelle Hodges noted new hires and volunteer coordinator. Brittany Sanders is the Detroit Fellow under Community Engagement Specialist.

INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE

Mike Terrell gave a brief infrastructure update. Noting that the Bell Isle Casino has had an investment of over \$750,000 to date. The primary focus has been to get every structure up to par. Investments have been made to the Flynn Pavilion, White House and the Casino. Noting the importance of partners like the Conservancy and the Penske Group, and the difference those partners have made. Mike anticipates approximately a 10 year window to catch up on the infrastructure needs of Belle Isle. Mike also noted that items that pertain to safety are addressed first. The most current grant will address the athletic complex, this will assist with attracting kids back to the island.

Last year, state received \$2.5 million for projects which has been allocated per the question from Barnhill. The next focus is to create design projects and to identify monies for the future; based on the reduction of federal funds. Mike Terrell indicated that \$1.25 million is coming this year to support additional projects. Barnhill asked about the reorganization as it pertains to the water department, specifically the role of the regional versus the local authorities. The Great Lakes Water Authority agreed to pay the city \$50 million per year.

Where does the island pipes fall? City is maintaining all pipes 12 inches and above and the state handles what is below. Curis commented on the importance of getting the federal designation and how to get the credits from the state. Hodges noted that the process is moving forward per her visit in Lansing last week.

SENIOR POWER DAYS

Stephanie Donaldson reported that Senior Power Days have been a huge success. The first 6 events attracted more than 1,700 seniors. The success has been attributed to the community outreach to all the counties. Stephanie acknowledged the ongoing support from the DNR, coupled with vendors, and team members have assisted with the success. Stephanie announced that the Detroit Symphony Orchestra will be performing on the Isle on October 19, 2015 from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. with 100 tickets allocated. She invited the group to contact her if interested in attending. Stephanie also shared the Veteran's event and other upcoming events.

SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

Karis Floyd provided an overview of the Summer Youth Employment program, which occurs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Spearheaded by Gary Williams, providing programs in archery, fishing, etc. to over 400 children and 125 adults. Gary would like to include hiking as a new program; Belle Isle has some of the best trails to get kids out into the forest under the Stepping Stone Program. He commented on the Healthy Kids, Youth Connection and MDOT Youth Employment Programs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS 3 minutes each

Mary Ellen Howard, lives 4 blocks from Belle Isle. Presented 3 questions:

1. What is the timeline for the strategic planning process?
2. At what point will the draft be presented?
3. Who are the decision makers regarding the plan?

Phil Mitchell

1. Detroit resident who wants to remove truck and auto racing from Belle Isle.

Alyson Jones Turner, Searching for TELOS

1. Attended Detroit Public Schools and was a golfer who used the island as her home course. Can we restrict some activities from the island?

Sandra Novacek

1. Governance and organizational matters. Suggested using this microphone for the future. Is concerned about accountability and transparency. Based on the DNR Advisory Committee Bylaws, are they finalized and if so, please update the website. There is a problem with the quorum and how can advise be given based on missing citizens input. The website is not current on minutes. The Open Meetings Act governs the group and it appears that the group is not in compliance. Is there a memorandum of understanding between the conservancy and the DNR?

Francis Candidge

1. Runs the golf range. Provided more than 400 golf lessons to kids 4-16 this summer with funding from LGPA and other funders. Going forward, they can accommodate more students but transportation is an issue.

Donald Green

1. Who is the wizard that orchestrated the Belle Isle Red Bull publicity stunt?

Skip Davis

1. Pertaining to the master plan, is a race track included?

Pete Forsythe

1. Has been a Detroit resident since 1978, safety is key to redevelopment, youth connections, he has heard that the number of AFAM visitors has been down, is that true? If there is a decline, if so why? Does the admission hinder the attendance? Detroit is an 82% AFAM city and should be taken into consideration when processing the redevelopment plan.

UPDATE – BELLE ISLE CONSERVANCY

Strategic Planning Process

- Focus on community engagement session and get feedback
- Organization of the island by zone & business operations strategies for each zone, coupled with a business model and MOA, etc.

- There is a MOU between conservancy & DNR
- Strategic plan will enhance the MOU
- Continue to meet with stakeholders and partners to provide areas of feedback

Cultural Campus

The Cultural Campus is moving forward with funds from the DNR and there are some concerns with the consultants not taking volunteers seriously. A better understanding of the roles is necessary and should be complete by October. Examples of such areas of focus include; the promenade behind the conservatory, lily pond enhancements, reuse boiler room space in conservatory, business models, operational issues, coordinating fees and other revenue streams. The report should be presented in October.

Committee member items

Lt. Arthur Green, DNR Law Enforcement officer, was honored in a moment of silence. Lt. Green was with the DNR since 1996. Also honored were Chad Wolf, Michigan State Police Officer, and Joan Gerky, local contributor who passed from cancer.

Other Items

Curis asked about getting Wi-Fi into the casino and handicap assessable needs for the park overall; especially Scott Fountain.

Hodges shared the following:

- Belle Isle Pizza will be opening soon.
- 2016 meeting dates need to be posted.
- Fountain will be open until September 20, 2015, the slide is closed.

Mike Terrell introduced Amanda Hertl as the new Urban Planner for Belle Isle and Milliken State Park.

Belle Isle is the new #1 state park for attendance, noting that 2.1M current and positioned to be #1 in revenue.

The park will include a payment booth to the left in the future.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2015 at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, 100 Strand Drive, Belle Isle.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:11a.m. by Michelle Hodges.

APPROVED: Date: 11/19/2015

Michelle Hodges
Michele Hodges
BIPAC Chairperson

Ron Olson
Ron Olson
DNR Parks and Recreation Division Chief